



News for Stakeholders

January 2011

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Cindy Smith

Administrator's Message

Hello and Happy New Year from APHIS. I'd like to welcome you to the re-launch of our monthly e-newsletter, now called "APHIS News for Stakeholders." While continuing to share this with our State regulatory partners, we are also making the newsletter available to a wider spectrum of those affected by our decisions and actions. We hope that you find this publication useful and are open to suggestions on how the newsletter might be improved by sharing them with us at stakeholder.comments@aphis.usda.gov

This increased accessibility is in keeping with one of my top priorities for APHIS, which is to broaden the concept of stakeholder to include a wider spectrum of the citizens we are here to serve. We value hearing ideas, comments, and concerns from all stakeholders and I encourage you to share your views—whether positive or negative—about APHIS proposals and activities, using the "Tell APHIS" link in this newsletter.



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2010 was a very busy year at APHIS. Animal disease traceability, biotechnology, European grapevine moth, and exotic citrus diseases were just a few of the hot issues that we addressed. We expect this frenetic pace of events will continue in the New Year. With your help, we hope to rise to the challenge with innovative and practical policy and regulatory solutions.

Thanks and I hope you enjoy our newsletter!

Cindy Smith
APHIS Administrator



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National Animal Health Laboratory Network: Preparing for FMD through Partnerships

As part of APHIS' ongoing effort to prepare for damaging animal disease outbreaks, Veterinary Services (VS) recently sponsored an extensive series of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) table-top exercises. Hosted by 16 different National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratories throughout the United States, the series began in May and ran through September.

The objectives of the exercises were to closely examine early-, mid-, and late-response activities related to a theoretical FMD disease outbreak. Participants included approximately 400 animal health professionals from Federal, State, and international governments, universities, and industry. Each exercise began with a foreign animal disease investigation, progressed through the confirmation and spread of FMD, and concluded with outbreak recovery and efforts to demonstrate disease freedom.

Lessons Learned

A previous table-top exercise series in 2008 for highly pathogenic avian influenza helped improve NAHLN laboratories' overall ability to respond to foreign animal diseases. Veterinary Services will build upon those lessons learned by determining how to address the following observations and recommendations identified during the FMD exercise series.

5 Areas of Preliminary Findings

- *Laboratory Preparedness* - improved overall understanding of the function and benefits of NAHLN; the need for a set of disease outbreak guidelines for the NAHLN laboratories.
- *Communication* - effective and open communication occurring among the State animal health officials, VS Area Offices and NAHLN laboratories; the need for education and information on communication protocols, reagent supplies, indemnity, surveillance and movement testing guidelines, and wildlife policy.



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- *Laboratory Capacity* - laboratories well prepared for early outbreak testing capacity; the need for long-term sustainability plan, including long-term supply of diagnostic reagents, and ability to have a real-time estimate of diagnostic capacity.
- *Diagnostic Development and Validation* - additional diagnostic capability is needed in the NAHLN laboratories; the need for additional development and validation of various FMD diagnostics.
- *Decision-Making* - VS Memo 580.4 widely used for decision making during foreign animal disease investigation; the need by States and NAHLN laboratories for more information on the VS decision-making processes.

Next Steps

Each laboratory participating in the FMD series will receive an individualized after-action report; an overall summary report, including findings and recommendations, will be generated and shared with stakeholders. Additional exercises will be held internal to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories to increase our internal preparedness. A wrap-up VS policy workshop will be held in late spring 2011 to discuss findings and gaps in VS policy identified throughout the exercise series.

The NAHLN program staff would like to thank all who participated in the exercises as well as those who collaborated in the development and delivery of the exercises. Partnerships are essential as we work together to safeguard animal health.

More information on the FMD Table-Top Exercises will be posted in early 2011 to the NAHLN Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/nahln/. For up-to-date information, consider subscribing to the NAHLN's quarterly newsletter, *The NAHLN Quarterly*. To subscribe, e-mail Jill Brown at jill.m.brown@aphis.usda.gov.



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Apollo Before



Apollo After - Image 1

Spotlight: APHIS' Animal Care Program Confiscation Activities

APHIS' Animal Care (AC) Program provides leadership for determining standards of humane care and treatment of animals under both the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and Horse Protection Act (HPA). The AWA requires that minimum standards of care and treatment be provided for certain animals bred for commercial sale, used in research, transported commercially, or exhibited to the public. Under the AWA, AC has the authority and obligation to confiscate any regulated animal that is in a condition of unrelieved suffering.

If the owner/licensee cannot or will not provide the proper care to relieve that suffering, Animal Care must make sure the animal is taken to a facility where it will receive humane care according to federal standards. A suffering animal is in an emergency situation, so APHIS moves quickly to ensure that the owner provides the care the animal needs. Inspectors clearly explain what needs to be done - such as requiring the facility's veterinarian to tend to an injury or health concern. Inspectors clearly explain what needs to be done - such as requiring the facility's veterinarian to tend to an injury or health concern. If proper care is not provided within 24 hours, the USDA confiscation team moves in.

"It becomes a flurry of activity, and it's pretty intense," says Dr. Laurie Gage, Animal Care's field specialist for large cats. Animal Care inspectors document a facility's compliance with their site visits and also handle the logistics, such as locating a new home for the animal and transporting it there. USDA's Office of General Counsel establishes the legal basis for the operation and advises APHIS officials every step of the way. APHIS' Investigative and Enforcement Services and USDA's Office of Inspector General provide security and, when necessary, arrange for a law enforcement presence at the confiscation site to see that the operation goes safely for all involved.



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While each confiscation presents a unique scenario, the focus of the Animal Care program remains the same. “The bottom line is always the welfare of the animals,” says Dr. Denise Sofranko, Animal Care’s field specialist for elephants.

For more information on Animal Care’s enforcement of the AWA, please visit the Animal Care website at: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/awa_info.shtml

Apollo After - Image 2



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APHIS expands Hungry Pests Web Site

Originally designed to educate the general public in California about invasive agricultural pests, APHIS' Hungry Pests website has been retooled and relaunched to target a national audience and to include forest pests such as the Asian longhorned beetle and emerald ash borer. Like its predecessor, the retooled site will be supported by a slate of dynamic television/radio ads and public service announcements that steer the public to the Web. Clips from the previous campaign are posted on the current site.

In addition to its easily navigable links about each pest, the site includes images to help identify pests, clear steps for people to take in support of pest control efforts, and information on how to report suspected sightings. The site also features an interactive U.S. Pest Tracker map so that you can see at a glance what pests are threats to particular States or counties, or which pests are under active quarantine in any given State and its counties.

In the coming months the site will be expanding its coverage to include 12 States with a higher risk for invasive pest introductions or spread. The 12 States are: California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington.

Click here to visit the Hungry Pests Web site: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/hungrypests/>

For more information on the Hungry Pests site, please contact Jacob Hegeman at Jacob.hegeman@aphis.usda.gov



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Dr. Wayne Wingfield,
Keynote Speaker



Mini Pet Shelter Booth

NASAAEP Holds Third Annual Summit: A Symposium on Best Practices in Animal Emergency Management

The National Alliance of State Animal & Agricultural Emergency Programs (NASAAEP) held its third annual Summit, December 6-9, in Las Vegas, Nevada, to discuss best practices in animal emergency management. The eight NASAAEP Best Practice Working Groups and a ninth Zoological Best Practice Working Group, all sponsored by USDA APHIS' Animal Care program, briefed the Summit audience about their progress in assembling best practice materials that will be available on-line in 2011, to States, local jurisdictions, and non-governmental organizations having a role in animal emergency management.

Key to this year's Summit program were presentations from nationally recognized experts in Animal Search and Rescue, Animal Decontamination, Disaster Veterinary Care, Emergency Animal Sheltering, Evacuation and Transportation, Planning and Resource Management, Preparedness and Community Outreach, and Training. Dr. Wayne Wingfield, a long-standing pillar in the field of animal emergency management, opened the Summit by reviewing the progress that's been made and highlighting work that's still to be done to advance the field. This year's Summit format broke into three tracks, addressing best practices, management issues, and practical "boots on the ground" issues in animal emergency management.

"A picture is worth a thousand words:" At this year's Summit, all Summit attendees were able to see first-hand the "mini pet shelter" booth, an outreach tool which NASAAEP, NARSC, AVMA, USDA, and FEMA have collaboratively set up at conferences in 2010, including the FEMA Individual Assistance/ESF 6 Conference, the AVMA Convention, and the International Association of Emergency Managers. The outreach is specifically targeted to emergency managers at the state and local level, as well as to veterinarians and other animal professionals who may not be actively involved in animal emergency management in their



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communities. The booth shows how a collocated pet shelter would be set up. Conference attendees can ask questions and engage in one-on-one discussions with subject matter experts on how to incorporate collocated pet sheltering into their emergency operations plans.

About NASAAEP

NASAAEP was incorporated in 2008 to serve as a forum for state-level animal emergency management agencies and organizations, including state agencies, state animal response teams (SARTs), and veterinary medical reserve corps (VMRC) programs, and others with a state-level role in animal disaster preparedness and response, to share information and best practices to enhance the field of animal emergency management. NASAAEP promotes an all-hazards/all-species approach to animal emergency management.

For additional information about becoming a member of NASAAEP, go to www.nasaaep.org.



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APHIS Launches New Tool for the Public to Share Comments, Ideas and Concerns around Animal and Plant Health

APHIS has launched a new tool to promote easy communication with the Agency on animal and plant health issues. "Tell APHIS" is a feature that allows members of the public to provide comments and ideas, as well as questions and concerns to the Agency in a transparent, public forum. The site allows users to view and comment on other posts as well as to rank other posts. The idea behind the site is to provide a venue accessible to as many members of the public as possible that allows for open discussions on APHIS issues. The Tell APHIS site is linked in with similar forums on other USDA topics and can be accessed either from the APHIS home page or from www.usda.gov/open.



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Karen Sliter

APHIS Employee Feature: Karen Sliter, Associate Deputy Administrator for Animal and Plant Health, International Services

Name: Karen Sliter, DVM

Title: Associate Deputy Administrator for Animal and Plant Health, International Services

Tell us about your role: I provide back-up to the IS Deputy Administrator position on the range of issues that International Services manages. On any given day this could include representing USDA on a Steering Committee at an International Organization to gain support for US positions abroad, to participating in a conference call to determine the best way forward to gain access for US agricultural products in an important overseas market, to meeting with International Services' employees to consider ways we can improve the services we provide. I enjoy working on managerial and leadership issues as much or more than I like the technical aspects of my work. I have a particular interest in the role and work of international organizations and how this affects US agriculture's prospects overseas.

How long have you worked at APHIS: I've worked with APHIS since I left private equine sport horse practice in 1992.

Education: BS in Biology and Languages, Lake Erie College, 1986. DVM from Ohio State University, 1991.

Most Memorable APHIS experience: Meeting the Queen of England was a memorable experience. I had worked in England during the 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak (which provided many difficult and memorable experiences). In the months following the outbreak, the Queen traveled to areas that had



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been heavily affected. One of the local veterinarians asked me to attend a typical British countryside picnic and smaller reception with the Queen “so that we can more appropriately thank you for all you did for our farmers.” Our discussion with the Queen, led by my English veterinary colleague, broached the subject of tuberculosis. It was a sensitive subject because of the suspected involvement of wild badgers, a protected species. The sensitivity of the subject didn’t appear to deter the Queen in the least, who evinced a willingness to speak frankly as well as an excellent understanding of the epidemiology when she leaned forward and commented conspiratorially, “It’s the badgers, isn’t it?”

Priorities for the coming months: Over the past couple of years, APHIS has spent considerable effort reviewing its international role and gaining consensus around international priorities for the coming years. A number of pieces-our overseas regional structure, our capacity building efforts, our trade strategy-are in place. Other pieces, such as APHIS’ role in international organizations, could use additional elaboration. I plan to work on this issue as well as several others as I also begin to prepare for my transition to our Brussels Regional Manager position. This move is planned for Summer, 2011.

Last good book read: I just finished “Managers, not MBAs” by Henry Mintzberg. This was an interesting read about what qualities we really need to develop in managers that provided interesting “food for thought” on how we help prepare people to lead organizations.

Favorite movie: I loved watching “The Princess and the Frog” with my kids. I love the New Orleans influence on the music and story line.

Hobbies: My main and favorite hobby is being a Mom to my four girls (Katrina-11, Jessica-8, Jacqueline-6 and Stephanie-2). I also do daily yoga and meditation, study spirituality, and ride dressage. My husband David and I enjoy long walks and going to the theater and opera.



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Vacancies in APHIS

All Agency vacancies are posted on the APHIS Web site. To view the entire list of APHIS vacancies go to www.aphis.usda.gov. Under Related Topics click on Find a Job in APHIS. The positions highlighted below are for relevant positions that are at the GS-13 level and above.

Position: [Supervisory Biological Scientist \(Division Director\)](#)

Location: Riverdale, MD

Pay Plan: GS-0401-14/15

Who May Apply: All U.S. Citizens

Position Closes: January 24, 2011

Position: [Administrative Officer](#)

Location: Fort Collins, CO

Pay Plan: GS-0341-13/13

Who May Apply: All U.S. Citizens

Position Closes: January 24, 2011

Position: [Supervisory Veterinary Medical Officer \(Area Veterinarian in Charge\)](#)

Location: Topeka, Kansas

Pay Plan: GS-0701-13/14

Who May Apply: All U.S. Citizens

Position Closes: January 31, 2011



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Position: [Supervisory Veterinary Medical Officer \(Area Veterinarian in Charge\)](#)

Location: Little Rock, Arkansas

Pay Plan: GS-0701-13/14

Who May Apply: All U.S. Citizens

Position Closes: January 31, 2011

Position: [Change Management Specialist](#)

Location: Riverdale, Maryland

Pay Plan: GS-0301-14/15

Who May Apply: All U.S. Citizens

Position Closes: January 31, 2011